

**Montana Supreme Court Commission on Self-Represented Litigants  
Minutes from May 2, 2007 Meeting**

**Attendance:**

<b><u>Helena</u></b>	<b><u>Billings</u></b>	<b><u>Kalispell</u></b>
Judy Meadows	Hon. Russ Fagg	Peg Allison
Hon. Michele Snowberger	Corbin Howard	
Ann Gilkey		
Tara Veazy		
Orijit Ghoshal		
Tim Little		

**Meeting called to order at 1:30 PM.**

Tim appointed to take minutes.

**1) Agenda Item One: Approval of minutes from 11/2/2006 meeting**

- Minutes approved.

**2) Agenda Item Two: HB 60**

- Tara provided a legislative update for the bill and discussed how it failed in the House.
- Commission decided to wait and see how the special session occurs before deciding whether to lobby for an amendment to the budget for pro se assistance.
- Possible approach for budget in two years: lobby governor to have it included in his budget.

**3) Agenda Item Three: Bench guide on self-represented litigants**

- Based on the California pro se training guide for judges.
- Judy will forward California "Bench Book" to the Commission.
- One focus will be on training clerks throughout the state, possibly via webex training or video conferencing. Judy already has the power point prepared for this training.
- Tara informed Commission that it would be possible to get a new Vista for this purpose, but that MLSA does not have supervisory capacity or space for the Vista.

#### **4) Agenda Item Four: Pro se forms**

- Commission discussed a new review process for the pro se forms submitted for review, but no change was adopted.
- Tara will send the disclaimer footnote to Orijit and Tim to be used on all new forms.
  
- Tara wants to work on readability on the user guides for the Answer to Petition for Parenting Plan and Answer to Petition for Dissolution. That work will be done within one week so that the forms and guides can be posted on the Law Library website.
- Tara moved for approval of the above Answers; Commission approved.
- Judge Snowberger moved for approval of proposed forms list; Commission approved.
  
- MLSA has a “Forms Committee” working on projects similar to the Commission. Tim will bring the proposed forms list from the MLSA committee to the next Commission meeting.
- Judge Snowberger has generated petition forms for land lords that she would like reviewed by the Commission for readability and possible approval. She will send them to Judy to post on the “proposed forms” section of the website.
  
- Commission discussed how the Supreme Court’s new privacy rule will affect the existing forms. The new rule goes into effect 12/31/2007.
- One idea is to make reference to the vital statistics form for personal information and leave that information off of the actual documents.
- Another idea is to create two separate orders of protection documents: one for the parties and police, and second one for the public.
  
- Orijit reported that the Commission’s new forms must be created in PDF format in order to avoid space in problems.
- Orijit will look into the possibility of using PDF will fillable fields.
- Judy will send Monte an email explaining the Commission’s newly format for pro se forms and ask that he use this format for the forms he submits to the Commission.
- Orijit reviewed the self-represented litigant’s service provider list and informed the Commission that he is drafting a survey to send to the service providers.
  
- Tim discussed the status of the order of protection HotDocs project. MLSA is considering making changes to the AG’s forms, which are unpopular and only used by about 50% of judges statewide.
- Judge Snowberger and Peg will both send their own versions of order of protection documents to Judy to put on the website.

**5) Agenda Item Five: Next Meeting**

- Commission agreed to meet again at the end of June. The tentative date and time of the meeting were set for June 20, 2007 at 1:30 PM.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM**